



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA HONORS NATION'S TOP ENTREPRENEURS DURING SMALL BUSINESS WEEK: MAY 21-27

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will honor America's top entrepreneurs – and name the National Small Business Person of the Year for 2000 – during ceremonies in Washington, D.C. marking National Small Business Week.

Communities across the nation have been holding events and selecting local winners in anticipation of National Small Business Week, which officially runs from May 21 to 27. The theme for this year's celebration, "A History of Success, A Millennium of Opportunity," honors the entrepreneurs who have helped create one of the strongest economies in U.S. history.

The SBA marks National Small Business Week with a three-day celebration in the nation's capital, from May 23-25. For many state Small Business Week winners, it's the culmination of a hectic month filled with local and state honors. The SBA celebration, to be held at the Renaissance Washington Hotel, will feature award ceremonies and discussions of issues vital to the small business community. The International Trade Center, located in the Ronald Reagan Building, will host this year's Small Business Week Winners' exhibits, showcasing each winner's business. This year marks the first time the exhibits will be open to the public.

Every president for 37 years has issued an annual proclamation celebrating Small Business Week. The festivities in Washington include the naming of a national Small Business Person of the Year. The national winner is selected from 53 state Small Business Persons of the Year – one from each state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Two runners up are also selected.

Small Business Advocates are also honored. These awards recognize individuals who have been advocates of minority-owned, women-owned and veteran-owned small businesses. In addition, awards go to a small business journalist, accounting and financial services representatives who contribute to small business development.

In the special awards category, the *Phoenix Awards* recognize a public official, a business owner and a volunteer whose efforts and contributions enabled their business or community to recover following a disaster. The SBA gives this award as part of its role as the nation's banker in times of disaster for homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes. This year, SBA is also recognizing an insurance company whose exceptional efforts and contributions enabled businesses, homeowners and communities to recover quickly after a disaster.

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The *Welfare-to-Work Awards* will be presented to a former welfare recipient who is now a self-supporting entrepreneur and to individuals who have contributed to the Welfare-to-Work initiative.

Additional special awards honor the *SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year*, *Small Business Exporter of the Year* and the *SBA Entrepreneurial Success Award* winner. The latter award is presented to a company that has developed into a large business with SBA assistance. The National *SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) Chapter of the Year* will also be honored.

Another first this year are the *New Markets Lending Awards* to recognize and honor the outstanding efforts of SBA's 7(a) Participating Lenders, Certified Development Companies and Micro-Lenders. These awards foster competition and increase the number of loans made to small businesses in areas designated as "New Markets."

State award winners and recipients of the advocate and special awards are nominated by local trade associations, chambers of commerce and business organizations. Several state award winners have been nominated by their employees.

During Small Business Week, the winners meet with top administration officials, members of Congress and leaders of national business organizations.

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*For more information on Small Business Week and a complete list of award winners, visit the SBA's Small Business Week Web site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>. Additional information about SBA programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov>. Or call the **SBA Answer Desk** at **1-800-U-ASK-SBA**.*

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